

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.837

18 January 2000

Original: ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Tuesday, 18 January 2000, at 10.15 a.m.

President:

Mr. Harald Kreid

(Austria)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 837th plenary meeting of the Conference and the first part of its 2000 session.

At the outset I should like to bid farewell to those colleagues who have left Geneva since the last session, namely, Ambassador André Mernier of Belgium, Ambassador Mounir Zahran of Egypt, Ambassador Aye of Myanmar and Ambassador Li Changhe of China, and wish them all possible success in their new assignments as well as happiness for them and their families.

I would also like to extend a cordial welcome to new colleagues who have assumed their responsibilities as representatives of their Governments in the Conference since we adjourned in September, namely, Ambassador Jean Lint of Belgium, Ambassador Hu Xiaodi of China, Ambassador Fayza Aboulnaga of Egypt, Ambassador Mya Than of Myanmar and Ambassador Nurlan Danenov of Kazakhstan. We look forward to working with them in pursuing our common goals.

I now turn to my opening statement as President of the Conference. Above all, I should like to express my gratitude to my predecessors, who during the course of last year grappled with much the same issues as those ahead of us now. I mention particularly Ambassador Leslie Luck of Australia, in whose work I was fully involved and with whom I participated in inter-sessional consultations, which provided valuable insights for my own presidency. I am also grateful to be able to count upon the able and professional support of Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the CD and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, Deputy Secretary-General of the CD, as well as of all other staff of the secretariat.

As I take up the function of President I am keenly aware of my responsibilities, but I am also aware of the transitory character of my mandate. Indeed, I feel that continuity and change are the traits of the CD presidency - for a few weeks I am entrusted with a role which has been performed by many of my colleagues and will be performed by many others. The time allotted to each of us is frequently too short to reap the benefits of our own initiatives. Success may come at any moment and independently of our efforts if and when circumstances are propitious.

Since as CD Ambassadors we take turns in presiding over the Conference, we have a special sense of shared responsibility, and this creates a very particular esprit de corps among ourselves.

Yet it is no secret that the powers of the President are quite limited. The strict rules of procedure reduce the President's margin of manoeuvre and assign to him the role of mediator and mitigator: mediator between divergent views and mitigator of a potentially pernicious divisiveness within the Conference. He can make use of the small lead in information which he derives from his consultations and he can offer solutions which are for the Conference to accept or to reject.

(The President)

Under these well-known framework conditions, I initiate our new sessional period. It is tempting to speak of a "millennium session". We have, however, reason to be prudent with the use of terms which sound promising and could therefore turn out to be misleading. I believe you will agree with me if I say that the name matters little as long as we achieve something worth while. This is precisely the question: are we going to achieve something worth while in the year 2000 after success has eluded us in the past three years?

I cannot hide the fact that I am rather concerned. In the inter-sessional period, Ambassador Luck and I made efforts to take the pulse of a number of delegations. It was not always measurable. Sometimes the pulse seemed feeble; sometimes its pace and rhythm were somewhat alarming. Thus, in our informal contacts we were left with a contradictory message concerning the overall temperature of the Conference. By the way, I will invite Ambassador Luck to present our findings to you in a more detailed manner in a moment.

It is, however, safe to say that the starting conditions for our work have not improved in recent months. I consider it unnecessary to point to the various developments that may have implications on the CD because they are uppermost in everybody's mind. We need to weigh the consequences of the changing international environment and decide whether we resign ourselves to the role of victims of circumstances beyond our control or else demonstrate to the outside world that the CD is able to render its services to the international community even under difficult conditions and that we are willing to provide the international arms control scene with a strong positive impetus which will have beneficial repercussions beyond our own work.

The CD's supreme task consists in the negotiation of arms control and disarmament treaties. When we embark on such a negotiation we do not know how long it will take. We do not know what the ultimate fate of our brainchild will be. Is the result of our long and arduous efforts going to find the blessing of our parliaments? Will there be a sufficient number of ratifications for the treaty to enter into force? Will the treaty be ratified by all those countries which are required to make it a truly valid instrument? We do not know. It all depends on circumstances which cannot be anticipated. But what we can and must do is to draft the best possible treaty text with the highest possible chances of being accepted by our Governments and lawmakers.

Thus our real choice is a rather simple one. It is a choice between doing potentially useful work or remaining inactive. Granted, activity - let alone activism - is not always the best service we can render our country. Diplomacy consists as much in doing things as in avoiding doing them. We have been demonstrating the virtues of prevention diplomacy for some time now. I believe that the CD has proved beyond reasonable doubt during the course of the past three years that it masters the art of dithering, delaying, side-stepping and circumvention. Is it surprising that frustration is building up and that a sense of despondency is spreading in this room? Let us, then, try again, mustering all our personal and professional energy, to arrive at compatible positions and bridge differences.

(The President)

According to rules 27 and 28 of the rules of procedure, the Conference is supposed to adopt its agenda and establish its work programme at the beginning of its annual session. It will not surprise you that my preliminary consultations have indicated that for the time being there is no agreement on the work programme. I will continue to consult and will keep the Conference informed on any further developments. In my efforts to achieve agreement I will build on the work of my predecessors in office, taking on board any new ideas that might emerge. I also think that on the two issues where in spite of protracted efforts we have been unable to achieve a common view, namely, on the establishment of a subsidiary body on nuclear disarmament and a subsidiary body on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, informal open-ended consultations might provide some useful guidance for the President.

While we should not for a moment lose sight of the goal, namely, to embark on the negotiation of a meaningful arms control treaty, we must not forget that to arrive at this point the Conference needs to take advantage of all available means of promoting the process of decision-making and it needs to engage on various fronts in order to develop the necessary momentum for a fruitful dialogue. I therefore believe that it would be in our common interest if special coordinators were to carry out assigned tasks in a number of areas in parallel to ongoing endeavours to find a solution to our overriding concerns.

I thus appeal to delegations to demonstrate the largest possible amount of flexibility in our procedures, particularly with regard to linkages and packages which only paralyse activities on all fronts without really advancing the causes they were meant to serve. The aspect of a conference remaining inactive over any length of time not only sends a pernicious signal to the outside world, it also diminishes our chances of achieving positive results in the priority areas. This is so because the virus of inactivity is likely to spread rapidly, producing a psychological barrier to efforts to address problems vigorously and in a spirit of optimism. It is, obviously, not in the power of your President to overcome single-handedly the existing obstacles. But it may be, at least to a certain extent, in my hands to instil into the Conference a working mood, and thus help create better conditions for success.

In conclusion, let me say that I am looking forward to working with all of you. Not only are we united in a good cause - and there are not too many equally good causes around in the world - but I have had the pleasure and privilege of becoming well acquainted with many of you during the last years, so that I can flatter myself on being on good personal terms with you. I can only hope that this good personal relationship will turn out to be useful in our work, which carries such far-reaching implications for our common future.

I should now like to invite the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, to read to us a message addressed to the Conference by Mr. Kofi Annan.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): The Secretary-General of the United Nations has asked me to convey the following message to the Conference on Disarmament:

"The Conference on Disarmament is a unique forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations. This first session of the twenty-first century is a new opportunity for the Conference to try to live up to its potential: to draw strength from recent achievements in some areas, and to take an honest look at lack of progress in others.

"Determined efforts continued last year to combat the scourge of landmines. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction entered into force in March, and its States parties held a successful first meeting in Maputo in May. The entry into force of Amended (Landmines) Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in December 1998 was also followed by the successful conclusion of the first annual conference of its States parties last month.

"The negotiations on a verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) made steady progress, and the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly reinforced the growing recognition that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is an issue of global concern. Let us hope that the decision to convene an international conference on illicit trade in small arms in the year 2001 will lead to comprehensive action.

"But at the same time, there was a deplorable lack of progress on the disarmament and international security issues which the international community considers the highest priority: the multilateral search for genuine measures of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and for ways to prevent an arms race in outer space. The fact that your Conference remains deadlocked on those issues is part of a wider and disturbing stagnation in the overall disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

"The START process has stalled. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty does not appear likely in the near term, though it is encouraging that the States involved in nuclear testing in 1998 are continuing their moratorium on further nuclear tests. A fissile material treaty has not even begun to be negotiated. The NPT review process itself, due to culminate at the next review conference in April, is shrouded in uncertainty. Conflicting priorities for the post-cold-war era have prevented agreement on convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, which could set universal goals for the future.

"Indeed, one of the more disturbing trends in 1999 was the emergence of new tensions between the major players over disarmament and international security issues. At the last General Assembly, concerns were expressed about both the proliferation of longer-range missiles and the development of missile defences. I strongly believe that the ABM Treaty occupies an important place in the contemporary body of arms control

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference
on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the
Secretary-General of the United Nations)

agreements and remains the cornerstone of strategic stability. If that regime is threatened, another long-sought goal - the prevention of an arms race in outer space - may elude us.

"Towards the end of last year's session, your Conference came very close to reaching consensus on mechanisms for dealing with both nuclear disarmament and prevention of an arms race in outer space. Such consensus would have unlocked the programme of work and allowed work to begin in earnest on a range of issues. This year, I hope you will continue your search for compromises in a spirit of flexibility and with a real sense of urgency. If you make tangible progress on items on your agenda in the first part of this session, the NPT Review Conference stands a better chance of succeeding.

"The international community places great importance on your work. This is borne out by the fact that 21 States are candidates for membership and by your decision last August to admit Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia as full members of the Conference. I hope you will not disappoint their expectations. For my part, I pledge the full cooperation of the United Nations in support of your endeavours and I wish you all a productive session."

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Petrovsky for delivering the message from Mr. Kofi Annan. I would ask Mr. Petrovsky to be kind enough to convey to the Secretary-General of the United Nations our appreciation for his contribution and the importance he attaches to our work.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has also sent me a communication transmitting all the resolutions on disarmament and international security matters adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, including those addressing specific requests to the Conference. This communication has been distributed by the secretariat as document CD/1602.

Once we have heard the speakers who would like to take the floor today, I intend to invite the Conference to consider, in an informal plenary meeting, the draft agenda for the 2000 session as contained in document CD/WP.505, as well as the requests received from States not members of the Conference to participate in our work during this session, as contained in document CD/WP.504. Both of these documents have been circulated by the secretariat. Thereafter, we shall resume the plenary meeting in order to formalize the agreements reached at the informal plenary.

Before we do so, I would like to invite Ambassador Leslie Luck of Australia, the outgoing President, to whom the Conference entrusted the inter-sessional consultations, to report on the outcome of his consultations, pursuant to paragraph 38 of the 1999 report of the Conference. Ambassador Luck, you have the floor.

Mr. LUCK (Australia): I thank you, Mr. President, and at the outset, may I extend you every good wish for a successful term in your demanding role as President of this Conference?

In September last year, when the Conference, through its annual report, mandated its outgoing and incoming Presidents to conduct inter-sessional consultations on a work programme, I held two particular ambitions. The first was to maximize prospects for the Conference commencing substantive work and set the stage for agreement early in 2000 on a programme of work. The second - very much in support of the first - was to maintain our collective focus on what had become known as the "Dembri package", which in the eyes of most, perhaps all, delegations described the closest point the Conference had come to agreement on a programme of work in 1999. Additionally, in pursuing these goals as President, it was my wish at all times to represent and reflect the views of the Conference's constituency in a balanced and fair way.

These were admittedly modest goals in keeping with the uncertain outlook for multilateral arms control and disarmament. Nevertheless, I had received very strong encouragement and support for these endeavours from delegations from every conceivable constituency within the Conference. It is a disappointment, therefore, that at the conclusion of my term as CD President, I cannot report success in facilitating the core agreement which would allow us to start work, and that I therefore have had to hand to my successor, Ambassador Kreid, an incomplete assignment.

But I do not conclude that we are necessarily any further from that goal than we were when this body last met in formal session.

In my view, there remains a strongly dominant sentiment among CD delegations that the Conference should commence work forthwith on a negotiated programme of work, and that the informal proposals outlined by Ambassador Dembri remain the "point of departure", as it were, for the essential agreement which would permit this.

In my assessment, the elements still required are a prevailing sentiment that the CD cannot credibly remain idle for another year, together with a readiness on the part of key delegations to show flexibility in regard to the two outstanding, or pending, issues - namely, PAROS and nuclear disarmament.

Stripped of the rhetorical and tactical flourishes which are occasionally indulged, the situation remains very much as I detailed it in my concluding remarks as CD President four months ago. There is, of course, a persistent and understandable anxiety, shared by many delegations, about the outlook for arms control and disarmament. But in the course of inter-sessional consultations, I encountered not one delegation which sought to discourage me from either the goal of early agreement on a work programme, or the underlying premises on which those consultations were based.

In this regard, I would make two brief observations. The first is to say that I do not believe we have yet exhausted our examination of positions on the work programme which

(Mr. Luck, Australia)

would permit agreement. For example, it was only in the very last moments of the 1999 session that one important delegation advanced ideas on PAROS with the aim of facilitating agreement on a work programme. The second is to say that too often in the field of security, disarmament and arms control, the enormity of the larger ambition is allowed to obscure smaller steps of potential importance.

It is clear to me that there are small steps which could be taken now, which could yet narrow the gaps in positions on the two outstanding issues and form the basis of agreement on a work programme. These steps would not necessarily realize any delegation's larger arms control and disarmament ambitions, but nor would they stand in their way.

To my mind the interests of the overwhelming majority of delegations - and potentially all delegations - would be served by taking those small steps, by providing an opportunity for the CD to address PAROS issues again, by facilitating dialogue on nuclear disarmament, thus moving towards goals long held by many CD delegations. By doing this, our collective energies would also be released upon the "agreed elements" of the work programme and specifically on an FMCT, which has been a top priority for multilateral negotiation now for several years.

Without diminishing in any way, therefore, the particular priorities held by individual delegations or the seriousness with which they regard developments in the wider environment, I relinquish the presidency convinced that the start of substantive work is within our grasp and should not be allowed to slip away. Moreover, as I have said repeatedly in our inter-sessional consultations, if the broader prospects are as gloomy as some would suggest, there is all the more reason to seize upon the possible - in the expectation that that will lead us towards the desirable - in disarmament and arms control. To this end, I continue to urge delegations to focus on the Dembri package and related texts as a basis for negotiation.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Luck for his report. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? If this is not the case, I would then proceed as I announced in the beginning, to suspend briefly the plenary and convene an informal meeting, open only to members of the Conference, in order to consider the draft agenda for the 2000 session and the requests received from non-members to participate in our work. We will thus suspend for a couple of minutes to allow the other delegations and visitors to leave the room.

The meeting was suspended at 10.50 a.m. and resumed at 11.25 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: The 837th plenary meeting is now resumed.

In accordance with the agreement reached earlier at the informal plenary meeting, may I take it that the Conference decides to adopt for its 2000 session the agenda contained in document CD/WP.505, which is before you?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The agenda will be issued as an official document of the Conference by the secretariat.

In connection with the adoption of the agenda, I, as the President of the Conference, should like to state that it is my understanding that if there is a consensus in the Conference to deal with any issues, they could be dealt with within this agenda.

I see the delegation of Pakistan has asked for the floor. Ambassador Akram, you have the floor.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, before you move to the issue of the observers, may I just make a statement for the record with regard to the agenda that we have just adopted?

You have just made a statement following the adoption of the agenda that the Conference on Disarmament is not precluded from taking up other issues under the present agenda. In this context, I would like to stress that the international community has now fully accepted the proposition that arms control and disarmament matters at the global level must be complemented by measures at the regional and subregional levels. This in fact reflects the specific dynamics of the arms races in various parts of the world. Both global and regional disarmament must therefore be pursued simultaneously.

The General Assembly has called upon the CD in resolution 54/54 M to negotiate principles for arms control at the regional and subregional levels. My delegation intends to pursue this proposal and recommendation of the General Assembly with the Conference on Disarmament under an appropriate agenda item.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan, and I think that I now would like to give a chance to the Ambassador of Germany, who has already announced that he would like to make a statement on the agenda. Ambassador Seibert, you have the floor.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): It is a particular pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on the assumption of the presidency of this Conference. We are all aware of Austria's long-standing strong commitment to arms control and disarmament. I know that you will make best use of your great diplomatic experience and spare no effort to get this Conference off to any early start of work. In this endeavour you can fully rely on the support of the German delegation, and we will heed the opening message you have given us today.

May I take this opportunity to thank both you and your predecessor, Ambassador Luck, for the intensive consultations carried out during the inter-sessional period? I would also like to welcome our new colleagues in this Conference. I am looking forward to working with them in pursuit of our common goals.

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

Germany has participated in the consensus on the agenda for this year's session of the Conference. I would like, however, to state for the record that Germany has done so with considerable misgivings since we are far from confident that this decision will move us forward to substantive work.

In the light of your statement, Mr. President, the decision we have just taken amounts to the following: The Conference on Disarmament agrees to deal with any issue it agrees to deal with. Evidently, it would have been difficult to oppose such a decision, since Germany has always maintained that this Conference is free in its decisions and that the Conference should be as flexible as possible in the way it conducts its business. However, this does not bring us one step forward to solving the problem that has beset the Conference for the past three years, namely, that the Conference has hardly been able to address any issue substantially and in depth. Last year, this became even more depressingly evident as the Conference was not able to agree on any mechanism whatsoever to deal collectively with any issue, be it through special coordinators or subsidiary bodies. As a result, the work of the Conference was limited to the reiteration of national positions in the form of general statements in the plenary.

The list of topics we have just adopted as the so-called agenda of this Conference is not only outdated, as everyone is aware; it has also lost all its practical significance for the work of this Conference. It contains subjects that have not been addressed substantively by one single delegation during the three years I have had the honour to participate in the Conference. On the other hand, the agenda does not contain topics such as the fissile material cut-off treaty and anti-personnel mines, which have been the subject of intensive consultations in past years and which the General Assembly of the United Nations has called upon the Conference to deal with. This deficiency is even more striking in view of the general agreement which existed during last year's session and hopefully still exists, that anti-personnel mines should be dealt with through a special coordinator, and FMCT by way of an ad hoc committee. For what mysterious reasons are these items then not explicitly mentioned in our agenda?

It has been argued in the past that the agenda of the Conference is in some sense a product of the General Assembly's first special session on disarmament in 1979 and can therefore not be changed until a new consensus emerges as the result of a new special session of the General Assembly. This is not a convincing argument. Firstly, the agenda has evolved since 1979, even if the changes have not been dramatic. Secondly, the final document of SSOD-1 is fully reflected in the so-called "Decalogue" adopted by the Conference in 1979. It is clear that on the basis of this Decalogue, the agenda of the Conference is intended to reflect the changing international security environment and resulting challenges for arms control and disarmament. Otherwise, the Decalogue itself would have been sufficient as a kind of permanent agenda of the Conference.

What is the purpose of the Conference's agenda if we do not immediately start substantive work on the items of the agenda? What sense does such an agenda make if immediately after its adoption a new hurdle is created through the demand for a so-called "comprehensive and balanced programme of work"? I have already pointed out, early in last year's session, that this concept of a so-called programme of work has no basis in our rules of

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

procedure, nor does it correspond to the practice of this Conference over many years. I admit that my comments of last year on this issue have evidently not been of much avail. It is precisely in the light of disappointing experiences of last year, however, that it is important to address this subject once again. In particular, there appears to be a certain misconception that the Conference can only conduct its work in subsidiary bodies - even worse, that the establishment of subsidiary bodies with precise mandates which anticipate discussions or negotiations is a precondition for starting any substantive work. This is surely not the intention of rule 23 of our rules of procedure. The creation of subsidiary bodies should facilitate the work of the Conference and should not create additional impediments.

I have noted with interest the statement by the coordinator of the G-21 at the recent Presidential consultations concerning the strong view that the CD should strictly abide by its rules of procedure. I can fully support this view, if it is not only the letter but the spirit that is abided by, and if no imaginary new rules are invented that create artificial procedural obstacles to the early start of our work in this Conference.

If the Conference were really to abide strictly by its rules of procedure, we would have adopted today an agenda taking into account the recommendations by the General Assembly and therefore including the items FMCT and APM. Following rule 28, we would have established a programme of work including the schedule of our activities for this year's session. On this basis, we would immediately begin with substantive work and take early decisions on how to organize our work in the most efficient manner.

I do not want to sound pessimistic at the outset of this historic year. I do however want to convey a note of caution and appeal to the shared responsibility and political will of all delegations. We must not allow this Conference to remain paralysed for a fourth consecutive year. We must tackle arms control and disarmament issues urgently without getting bogged down in procedural tussles. I trust that this concern is shared by the vast majority of delegations represented in this room.

The German delegation is prepared to enter immediately into a substantive debate on all items on the agenda and all other items to which a significant number of delegations attach importance. We recognize that there remain differences of view on how best to organize our work and on the substance of certain items. But this should neither hold up a debate on all items nor should it block the establishment of mechanisms on those items where agreement already exists, such as the appointment of special coordinators.

Mr. President, you can count on the full support of the German delegation in your endeavours to move forward to substantive work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of Germany for this thoughtful and thought-provoking analysis, and now I give the floor to the Ambassador of India. You have the floor, Madam.

Ms. KUNADI (India): I would like to make a brief statement to put on record India's position with regard to the agenda just adopted and the statement made by Pakistan referring to General Assembly resolution 54/54 M on convention disarmament at the regional level. India voted against this resolution, and we do not feel that the Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate forum for the consideration of such issues. This is going to be the position of India if such a proposal were to be made.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of India. I see no other delegation wishing to take the floor, so then I believe I can move on to the second item, namely, the question of the observers, and therefore I should now like to invite the Conference to take a decision on the requests for participation in our work from States not members of the Conference. These requests are contained in document CD/WP.504 and were received from the following States: Angola, Azerbaijan, Brunei Darussalam, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Gabon, Georgia, Ghana, Holy See, Iceland, Jordan, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Mauritius, Nepal, Oman, Philippines, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovenia, Sudan, Thailand, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uruguay and Zambia.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite these States to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure? I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: This concludes our business for today. I have no speakers on my list. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

Before concluding this plenary meeting, I would like to refer to document CD/INF.1/Rev.34 before you, which contains information regarding certain organizational aspects of the session. In this regard, I should like to draw your attention to paragraph 5, relating to the documentation of the Conference, and to remind you that United Nations regulations do not permit the translation and distribution of statements delivered by delegations in plenary meetings as separate CD documents.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 20 January, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.838
20 January 2000

Original: ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND THIRTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 20 January 2000, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Harald Kreidl (Austria)

GE.00-60196 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 838th plenary meeting of the Conference.

On my list of speakers for today I have the representatives of Ireland and Argentina. I call on Ambassador Anne Anderson.

Ms. ANDERSON (Ireland): Mr. President, might I first offer you very warm congratulations on assuming the presidency and wish you the very best of luck for your term in office?

It is now some months since I had the pleasure of speaking to the Conference on the occasion of Ireland's admission, along with four other candidates, to this body. At the time I described our determination to be admitted to the Conference as an act of faith in its future. We are still believers. But the continuing stalemate within the Conference and the difficult international context within which it is seeking to operate must give us cause for concern.

The Conference sent a report to last year's General Assembly which was devoid of substance save where it noted the admission of five new members. Welcome news for us, but cold comfort to those who expect more of this body.

It has become something of a cliché to refer to the new year bringing fresh resolve to proceed with difficult challenges. In fact, there is little that is new about our situation. The most important task of this Conference remains what it has been all along: the negotiation of significant multilateral instruments of disarmament with universal application.

The past year has not been a good one. It brought a severe setback to the prospects for ratification of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty. It also saw deeply unhelpful developments in terms of stalled bilateral negotiations towards reductions in nuclear arsenals, increased regional tensions and rivalries, and plans for national missile defence. The ABM Treaty, which the United Nations Secretary-General described in his message to us this week as a cornerstone of strategic stability, is under challenge.

Time and time again we, along with others, have said that paralysis is not a viable option for this body. If the Conference on Disarmament over a prolonged period proves itself incapable of offering a valid forum for the negotiation of real disarmament measures - and it is nuclear disarmament which lies at the heart of our difficulties - then those who wish to see progress cannot be blamed for looking elsewhere. And those who do not wish to see such progress will conclude that they are free of pressure to restrain development in the field of nuclear weapons. In such a context, the essential balances of the NPT - in effect, a bargain between those who possess nuclear weapons and those who do not - are increasingly put at risk.

The three elements around which our discourse circles again and again are: nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and FMCT. I would like briefly to restate Ireland's position on each of the three.

(Ms. Anderson, Ireland)

Our view, which we have stated here a number of times and which we know to be widely shared, is that the CD should without delay establish a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament. As to the mandate of such a body, we believe it should permit the Conference to deal with issues which are relevant to the consideration of future multilateral efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament and inform bilateral efforts in that direction.

Without such an entity, the CD cannot argue that it is dealing with the most serious threats to international security. And if it is not dealing with these threats, the CD loses its claim to be carrying out the role assigned to it within the United Nations system.

Ireland also agrees that the CD should embark on negotiations on the non-weaponization of outer space. We note there was wide support for the launching of negotiations and for proposals placed on the table in 1999; if there is a collective readiness to show flexibility, progress here is surely within our grasp.

We have never accepted the view that, because differences on the best route to nuclear disarmament are profound, then progress on practical measures to limit their availability are futile or must wait their turn. Notwithstanding the disturbing fate thus far of the CTBT, we must begin to work towards the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty.

An FMCT would form one of a nexus of instruments providing a basis for disarmament in the nuclear field. Many issues which are highly relevant to a commitment to disarmament would inevitably arise in the course of the negotiation. Indeed, the measure of the success of the negotiation would be the extent to which it would tilt the international balance in favour of the elimination of nuclear weapons.

We do not claim too much for an FMCT. Such a treaty is no more than a sign of serious intent towards disarmament. But it is an important part of the wider effort. And it is particularly important to those of us who respect our obligations under the NPT not to produce such material.

While the CD endlessly debates, worrying developments are taking place. Stockpiles of fissile material are already too large. While stocks are being reduced in some quarters, new production is in evidence elsewhere. It is obvious that the window of opportunity to make a meaningful attempt to curb the development of fissile material will not remain open for ever.

The Conference must find an accommodation between these three elements which will permit us to break the deadlock. The outgoing President indicated at our last session that no delegation had professed anything other than a readiness to go forward. The next weeks will show whether we are actually prepared to give substance to our words.

Our work in this Conference has an important bearing on the atmosphere in which the NPT Review Conference takes place in New York in April. It would be wrong to suggest that failure here will mean failure to reach agreement among the States parties in New York. But it would be equally wrong to suggest that only after success in New York can we hope to see success in this Conference. The truth is that each failure in the process of seeking disarmament

(Ms. Anderson, Ireland)

in nuclear weapons, of which this Conference is part, raises the stakes for the next effort, and creates pressures which are only rarely productive. The Conference will ill serve the New York review by remaining deadlocked, just as failure there would ill serve our efforts in Geneva.

My authorities attach very great importance to multilateral disarmament efforts and are unwilling to remain inactive in the face of stalemate. Ireland was one of 60 co-sponsors this year of a resolution in the General Assembly which called for a new agenda in seeking nuclear disarmament. None of us can afford complacency in the face of the lack of progress between the nuclear-weapons States in nuclear arms reductions negotiations, when the legal underpinnings of fragile strategic stability are being undermined, when so little is proving possible in terms of multilateral negotiation. Our efforts here remain a test of the will of the international community to re-establish momentum towards genuine nuclear disarmament.

We are fully conscious that the Conference on Disarmament remains the appropriate forum for multilateral negotiation of instruments of disarmament. That is why we so much wished to join and why we will continue to urge a further expansion in membership and a renewed vigour in Conference activity.

But appreciative as we are of membership, we are wary of succumbing to an insider's mentality - a sense of déjà vu that blunts the impatience for progress. Realism cannot be defined as resigning ourselves to going nowhere in this body for yet another year. On the contrary, realism is looking to what is happening in the world around us while this body procrastinates. We join you, Mr. President, in your call to us finally to get down to work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Ireland for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

(continued in Spanish)

Now I have pleasure in giving the floor to the representative of Argentina, Ambassador Guillermo González, who will be leaving Geneva shortly to assume new important responsibilities. During his relatively short stay heading his country's mission here in Geneva, it fell to him to chair the Conference on Disarmament at a difficult time when attempts were being made to reach agreement on our programme of work. In carrying out his mandate, Ambassador González showed his diplomatic skill, and the balanced and thoughtful way in which he occupied the Chair earned him the trust and respect of all the member States of the Conference. He has the satisfaction of knowing that during his term of office the Conference admitted five new members. I am also convinced that his experience acquired in that context will be of use to him when he takes up his duties as a newly appointed member of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. I am sure that all of you will join me in conveying to him and his family our best wishes for the future. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): First of all, Mr. President, allow me to thank you for your complimentary remarks concerning myself and the work that I had the honour to accomplish as representative of my country in this Conference on

(Mr. González, Argentina)

Disarmament. Allow me also to convey to you my congratulations on taking the Chair of the Conference, and to extend to you our appreciation and support for the efforts that we know you will be making in order to continue to try to guide our work. I would also like to thank Ambassador Leslie Luck of Australia for the excellent work he accomplished during his term as President, and in particular to congratulate him on his unswerving optimism and willingness to seek options that will allow us to reach agreement.

Today I have to bid farewell to the Conference and to all the good colleagues with whom I have had the pleasure of working as Permanent Representative of Argentina. My assignment in Geneva has been short - 16 months - but that does not mean that it was lacking in intensity, and as you yourself mentioned a few moments ago, it was during this time that I had the good fortune to occupy the Chair of the Conference on behalf of my country.

In that office I made every effort to secure agreement on the programme of work so that negotiations could start on specific subjects. I recall that at the end of my term of office I was able to identify those subjects on which all regional groups had given their agreement. At the same time I identified those other questions where differences of opinion still existed.

Today, and especially having listened carefully to Ambassador Anderson, one cannot but feel concern about the current situation. One often hears in informal conversations with colleagues that the situation regarding disarmament and non-proliferation issues is even more complicated than it was last year. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that, as external circumstances have a bearing on its work, paralysis in the activities of the Conference may be viewed in itself as a sign of the times and will have a very negative effect.

The political will of the member States of the Conference is the only instrument we have for adopting decisions, yet it is we, their representatives, who must make every possible effort to restore that will to negotiate and work together, without any preconditions.

As early as August 1999, all the regional groups had identified sufficient elements of agreement to set up ad hoc committees which would begin working on the issues of fissile material production, and on international arrangements to offer assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. There were also elements that pointed to consensus for the appointment of special coordinators on the issues of anti-personnel mines and transparency in armaments, and for the consideration of the agenda, the membership of the Conference and how to make it work more efficiently.

At that time no agreement had been reached as to how to handle the issues of nuclear disarmament or the prevention of an arms race in outer space. On the two latter subjects, important proposals or suggestions had been made by my dear friend, the very distinguished Ambassador of Algeria, Mohamed-Salah Dembri, who preceded me in the Chair of the Conference.

Although our work is carried out in harmony with the work going on in other forums, we should not allow timetables outside this Conference to determine when or how this body adopts its decisions. At the beginning of this new session, there are elements of the programme of work

(Mr. González, Argentina)

on which decisions could be taken. As representatives of our countries entrusted with dealing with matters of disarmament and non-proliferation, we should make supreme efforts and sharpen our imaginations so that opportunities to make progress towards those objectives do not continue to be lost.

And even if our efforts might be in vain and the objective of reaching an agreement may not be achieved, it is nevertheless still true that the Conference on Disarmament is in itself a confidence-building measure, and it is a reminder that the ultimate objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation remain as valid as ever.

Despite the fact that I am leaving this Conference on Disarmament, I will continue to be in close contact with its subjects of work. It is my intention to take every opportunity that arises to contribute to progress by the international community, without differentiating between small or major subjects, towards our objectives.

As I end this brief statement, allow me to express my special thanks to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference, and Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, Deputy Secretary-General, as well as all the secretariat staff, for the constant efforts they have been making in support of one of the noblest instruments of multilateral diplomacy, the Conference on Disarmament.

Finally, I would like to bid all of you farewell, esteemed colleagues, thanking you for your invaluable support and sympathy, and to assure you of my readiness to continue working on our common tasks.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Argentina for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

(continued in English)

We have now concluded the list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? The representative of Brazil has the floor.

Mr. AMORIM (Brazil): Mr. President, first of all let me salute you and your predecessor. I know it is a bit unusual in the CD to take the floor like that, but if you will allow me just two words I think I could not pass up the occasion of the farewell by Ambassador Guillermo González without two words of my own on behalf of my country.

(continued in Spanish)

I think you spoke on behalf of all of us in mentioning the qualities and the efficient and professional way in which Ambassador González discharged his duties, including those of President of the Conference. I should like to add my voice to those comments, but in the special case of such a fraternal relationship as we have between Brazil and Argentina, a relationship which moreover carries special significance for this Conference through the example both

(Mr. Amorim, Brazil)

countries gave in their cooperation in respect of disarmament and non-proliferation, especially, but not only, in the nuclear area. I think that it is fitting to say a word just to express the hope that Ambassador González will continue his extremely important work in helping us with this cause.

Mr. ILLANES (Chile) (translated from Spanish): I wish to be associated with the words of Ambassador Amorim in saying that on Chile's side too we have greatly appreciated the course followed so successfully and so constructively by Ambassador Guillermo González and that we endorse the good wishes of this entire Conference, which have been expressed so well by you, Sir, in Spanish, in wishing Ambassador González every success in the very important position he is going to occupy now.

The PRESIDENT: If there is no other delegation asking for the floor, I would like to say a few words on the status of my efforts to come to an agreement which would permit us to proceed to the adoption of our work programme. At this point, it is of course for me - and you will understand that - impossible to draw any conclusions - and I also do not want to do it - on the chances we have of solving our problems. I only want to say that as far as I am concerned, I believe they have to be resolved rapidly. If we miss the chance within the first weeks - which by the way would correspond to our rules of procedure to adopt our work programme at the beginning of our session - if we miss this opportunity, I believe that there will be a lessening chance - for many reasons which have been mentioned by me and others - of getting this Conference to work in this session.

I am still in the process of some bilateral consultations, and if I come to the conclusion that the reactions I get from delegations are not - may I say - "completely intimidating for the presidency", I will then proceed to ask the groups to look at the proposals which we are making and to give me as soon as possible a feeling of what the members of the Conference think about these texts. I believe that this is all that I can indicate for the time being. As far as the time-frame is concerned, I do believe that we would have to move towards and into the groups already next week.

I should now like to take up for a decision the requests from Costa Rica, Greece and Qatar to participate as observers in the work of the Conference during this session without first having considered them in an informal plenary meeting. I hope that this will be an acceptable way to proceed. The requests of the States which I mentioned are contained in document CD/WP.506, which is before you. May I take it that the Conference can agree to these requests? I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: This concludes our business for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this point? I see none. The next plenary meeting of the Conference is scheduled to be held on Thursday, 27 January at 10 a.m. in this room.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Thursday, 27 January 2000, at 10.15 a.m.

President:

Mr. Harald Kreid

(Austria)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 839th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Malaysia, who will be speaking on behalf of the Group of 21, and of China. I first give the floor to the representative of Malaysia, Ambassador Hamidon Ali. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. HAMIDON (Malaysia): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor at this present session, I would like to express our congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference. We, the Malaysian delegation, are delighted to see you in the Chair and will give you our support and cooperation in your efforts to make some headway in the rather difficult task that lies in front of us.

I am, as you have stated, making a statement on behalf of the Group of 21. The Group of 21 expresses its satisfaction that the Conference has adopted its agenda for the 2000 session. This session of the CD commences its work against a backdrop of serious and multifarious challenges facing the international community in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation in all its aspects, and international security, particularly the attempts to justify the perspective of indefinite possession of nuclear arsenals and related concepts of nuclear deterrence.

The Group stresses that as the single multilateral negotiating forum in disarmament, the CD's programme of work should be responsive to these challenges, to the interests and priorities of all its members and to the aspirations of the international community in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation in all its aspects, and international peace and security. The Group expresses its concern that the Conference on Disarmament was unable to undertake substantive work on the basis of an agreed programme of work in 1999, in spite of the flexibility shown by the Group in regard to a number of formal and informal proposals that were made during the course of that session. The Group reaffirms its readiness to participate constructively in all efforts aimed at reaching agreement on a programme of work which is comprehensive and balanced.

In this context, the Group reaffirms its proposals contained in CD/1570 on the programme of work and CD/1571 on a draft decision and mandate for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

The Group emphasizes that nuclear disarmament is the highest priority for the Conference on Disarmament. It stresses the importance of the elimination of the possibility of nuclear war, the threats to humanity derived from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the possible use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It underscores the need to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons and emphasizes, in this regard, the urgent need to commence negotiations without delay.

(Mr. Hamidon, Malaysia)

The Group has already expressed, in document CD/1549 of 12 August 1998, its position with regard to the establishment of an ad hoc committee under agenda item 1, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", to negotiate on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator contained in CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space has assumed greater urgency because of legitimate concerns that existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter imminent attempts for the further militarization of outer space. In accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 54/53, the Group emphasizes the urgent need for commencement of substantive work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In this connection, the Group calls upon the States parties to the ABM Treaty to fully comply with its provisions.

While various approaches exist, the Group expresses its conviction that efforts for the conclusion of a universal and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued.

The Group hopes that the Conference will commence early substantive work during the 2000 annual session and to this end reaffirms its readiness to participate constructively in all efforts aimed at reaching agreement on the programme of work. The Group urges other groups to display matching flexibility and calls upon the President of the Conference to intensify efforts aimed at finding agreement on a programme of work, so that substantive work of the Conference can commence without delay in accordance with the rules of procedure.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Malaysia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Hu Xiaodi. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, at the outset please allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of office as the first President of this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament. Mankind has entered a new year, new century and new millennium. I hope that with your rich diplomatic experience you will steer the Conference through a good beginning, laying down a solid foundation for future work. Meanwhile, I would like to thank your predecessor the outgoing President, distinguished Ambassador Luck of Australia, for conducting extensive inter-sessional consultations that greatly benefited all of us. I would also avail myself of this opportunity to express my gratitude to the CD Secretary-General, Mr. Petrovsky, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Bensmail, and all my colleagues in this room. It is my intention to maintain friendly cooperation in all aspects between the Chinese delegation and you all.

On 9 and 10 December President Jiang Zemin of China and President Boris Yeltsin held their second informal summit, conducting an in-depth exchange of views on issues of common interest and issuing a joint statement elaborating on, inter alia, the world situation, the role of the United Nations and international security, arms control and disarmament. The important

(Mr. Hu, China)

principles, positions and policies contained in this document will guide my delegation's work in the Conference on Disarmament. Together with the delegation of the Russian Federation, we have requested the circulation of this joint statement as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

The new century and new millennium increase our hopes for a brighter future. The Chinese people, together with all other peoples of the world, are striving to realize the goals of peace, security and development. It should be pointed out that what we need is lasting peace, universal security and common development world-wide, not just for a single State or a group of States. The bitter experiences of the two world wars in the last century told us that, in order to reach these goals, all nations must join efforts to advance the arms control and disarmament process in a just, reasonable and comprehensive way. In retrospect, we can see that all the peace-loving nations and people have made unremitting efforts to this end and have achieved great things.

While we are looking to the future with great hope, a series of negative developments in the world today cannot but make us realize that the situation is grave and the task is arduous. In the global context, the cold-war mentality is still present, not to say renascent. Hegemony and power politics are on the rise. Wanton interference in other countries' internal affairs is becoming extreme. Large-scale military force has been used in international relations without the authorization of the United Nations. The gigantic military bloc, instead of fading away, is growing and gaining in strength; a certain country, for its own benefit and in disregard of the demands and appeals of General Assembly resolutions passed year after year, applies expediency and double standards to existing arms control and disarmament agreements, even trying to weaken or abolish the relevant treaty so as to keep the door open for its energetic research, development and proliferation of advanced missile defence systems which undermine the strategic balance and stability. The CTBT has been trampled on and faces an unknown future, one of the reasons given being that it is "insufficient to ensure perpetual supremacy in nuclear weapons". More and more sophisticated weapons keep emerging. Information warfare and space warfare have become the idiom of the military personnel of the super-Power.

All these developments in so short a period of time are extremely worrisome. People cannot but ask: is the objective common security for all States or absolute security enjoyed by a single State at the expense of all others? Is it still to guard against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to pursue arms control and disarmament, including nuclear disarmament? These developments have undermined confidence and security perceptions among States, pose serious threats to the achievements already made in arms control and disarmament, and inevitably have a destructive influence on our future work. We think that international arms control and the disarmament process have reached a crucial crossroads.

Undoubtedly, we are faced with both opportunities and serious challenges. As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament has an indispensable role to play in safeguarding world peace and security. Under the present circumstances, what should the CD do? The correct approach is neither to shy away from difficulties nor to bypass

(Mr. Hu, China)

contradictions. On the contrary, the CD should face up to reality and confront its difficulties, focusing on the major substantive issues that have a bearing on international peace and security and addressing all the interrelated key issues on its agenda in a comprehensive and balanced way.

Specifically, the demands that last year's General Assembly resolutions made upon the CD should guide us in formulating our programme of work this year, because they reflect the widely shared expectations of the international community and highlight important and urgent issues in the field of arms control and disarmament. The General Assembly resolutions reiterate that the CD has the lead role in negotiating a multilateral agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and invites the CD to establish an ad hoc committee as early as possible during its 2000 session. They call upon the CD to establish on a priority basis an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to commence negotiations early in 2000 on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. They also call upon the CD to negotiate and conclude a fissile material cut-off treaty as early as possible on the basis of the 1995 report by the Special Coordinator and the mandate contained therein. They recommend that the CD actively continue intensive negotiations with a view to reaching early agreement on effective international safeguards for non-nuclear weapon States. They request the CD to commence negotiations on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. These requirements are set forth respectively in resolutions A/RES/54/52, 53, 54 (D) and 54 (P).

What we should do now is to conduct earnest and serious work in accordance with the General Assembly's demands. As far as China is concerned, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including the prohibition of outer space weapons and anti-ballistic missile systems which undermine strategic stability, is a top priority. The negative developments in this field have stalled the nuclear disarmament process and undermined the basis for non-proliferation. The Chinese delegation maintains that the CD should re-establish an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, pursuant to the wording set forth in document CD/1576, and commence negotiations on the prohibition of the testing, deployment and use of weapons, weapon systems and their components in outer space. Having presented our views on outer space and missile defence issues on many other occasions, we will further expound our positions and proposals in this regard. The Chinese delegation is also in favour of commencing serious multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament with a view to achieving the objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons at an early date. This is the request of the times. Addressing the United Nations General Assembly in 1994, Mr. Qian Qichen, Vice-Premier and at the time Foreign Minister of China, pointed out that, as mankind had been capable of inventing nuclear weapons in the twentieth century, it was entirely capable of banning and thoroughly destroying such weapons in the twenty-first. Now the twenty-first century has arrived, let us make earnest efforts to honour our commitment and realize that goal.

The Chinese delegation sincerely hopes that, as the new year begins, all the CD members will demonstrate a fresh will to promote real disarmament, fully take into consideration the concerns and proposals of the various parties, and genuinely live up to the universal aspirations

(Mr. Hu, China)

of the international community as reflected in the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions, so that an early agreement can be reached to address all the important issues in a comprehensive and balanced way. On this basis, we can work out a good programme of work and make joint efforts to achieve the primary objective of nuclear disarmament, as well as other benchmarks in arms control and disarmament in the twenty-first century.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

I should therefore now like to take up for a decision the requests of Kuwait and Moldova to participate as observers in the work of the Conference during this session without having first considered them in an informal plenary. These requests are contained in document CD/WP.507, which is before you. May I take it that the Conference can agree to these requests?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: This concludes our business for today. Does any other delegation want to take the floor at this stage? I recognize the representative of Switzerland. Ambassador Hofer, you have the floor.

Mr. HOFER (Switzerland): I would just like to draw the attention of delegates to the fact that the Swiss Foreign Minister and Federal Councillor, Joseph Deiss, will address the Biological Weapons Ad Hoc Group this coming Monday, 31 January, at around 11.30 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you for the announcement, Ambassador Hofer.

Before we conclude for today, I just want to make some brief remarks. Delegations are aware, through the reports they have undoubtedly received from the Group Coordinators, of the state of affairs, that is, of the situation we are in concerning the efforts undertaken by the presidency to reach agreement on the texts which I have submitted to you. These efforts have not achieved a unanimous positive response. In this Conference - I do not have to point this out - if you have 95 per cent adherence, it may be gratifying, but it does not help you. You need 100 per cent. My efforts in the next days will be dedicated to where the 100 per cent go and it will be up to you to judge what chances I have to arrive at this goal, which has eluded some of my predecessors as well. But it should not be for want of effort and dedication on my part.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 3 February, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.